



## SEARCH

**Dandridge's Mill is an eco-luxurious wonder**

It's not unusual to see old watermills converted into swanky new apartments in this day and age, but rarely can they have had the appeal of Dandridge's Mill in East Hanney.

**Environmentally friendly**

Built in the 1820s, the mill has had a chequered history, but its origins lend themselves to modern-day living. When Hallidays Developments got hold of it, prize-winning materials science engineer Henry Reily-Collins, the grandson of the firm's founder, was keen to see its conversion undertaken in an environmentally-friendly way.

The advantage of converting a silk mill rather than a flour mill into housing is the size of the windows in the original structure. Silk manufacturers needed more light to see what they were doing, a luxury not afforded to those working in the flour milling industry.

**Generous proportions**

"When Dandridge's Mill was built it was at the forefront of the technology of its time," explains Melanie Reily-Collins, Henry's sister. The silk trade declined and the building was used for flour milling instead.

"During the war, it was used to build parts for Mosquito planes, then it became an artists' and sculptors' studio," she says.

The family were drawn to the building because of its generous proportions.

"It still had a lot of its original features and we could see it would make beautiful apartments. On top of that, we knew we could create a really green refurbishment," she says.

**Archimedean screw**

Enter Henry, who wanted to make the most of the power in the water gushing past the old mill. He set about installing an Archimedean screw to provide electricity to the new apartments. The screw is the first in the county and only the second in the country. It can generate 5.69kW and when excessive power is created, it goes back into the grid – effectively saving money for the apartment owners who can watch their meters run backwards on a good day. Rainwater is recycled back into the river before the screw, which in turn generates more electricity.

**Super-efficient**

"It's brilliant," says Melanie, whose enthusiasm for the project shines through. "The screw is very environmentally-friendly, the fish can swim up and down it."

Not content with this, Henry also wanted the mill's hot water to be generated using a communal heat-pump. It took some persistence on his part to find a company willing to install it – eventually he learned that the Swedes have been using such a system for years! Rather than a ground-source heat pump, with coils laid underground, there's a water-source heat pump installed in the river. The mill has been super-insulated, exceeding building regulations by 25 per cent and as if that was not enough, photovoltaic array, low energy and advanced lighting has been installed. The mill has a 91 per cent reduced carbon footprint – solar photovoltaics top up the heating in summer when the sunshine is brighter and water flow is reduced – a perfect balance!

**Passion**

The building project itself has included recycling, reusing and reclaiming elements of the original mill wherever possible. Flagstones, beams and tiles have been re-incorporated into the building, which has been converted into three luxurious three and four bedroom apartments together with a three-bedroom wheelhouse. Every member of the Reily-Collins family feels passionately about the project and each has brought his or her own expertise to effect its completion.

**New solutions**

Engineer Henry Reily Collins has sought new solutions to old problems and has persisted in his belief that there are ways to achieve a dream property without costing the earth. Teula has given up her job managing oil development projects in the United States to return to the family fold and engage in the project, while Melanie is managing the marketing side of the business.



Above: The Archimedean screw



Above: Dandridge's Mill as it once looked



Above: The Reily-Collins family



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**Family business**

At the heart of it are their parents, Binnie and Edward Reilly-Collins. There are three sides to the family business, Hallidays Developments, Hallidays Fine Antiques and Hallidays UK, which produces individually-designed, hand-made fine panelling. Dandridge's Mill has inspired the family to create the answer to sustainable living in the most contemporary way. It's the shape of things to come but still respects the technology of the past.

For more information about Dandridge's Mill visit [www.dandridges-mill.co.uk](http://www.dandridges-mill.co.uk).



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